

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2396
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY LISBON
USMISSION USNATO
DIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
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USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
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AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: PCF PROTEST: THE LEADERSHIP LAUNCHES A COUNTER-
ATTACK

REF: PARIS 13921
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SUMMARY. USING THE STRONGEST LANGUAGE TO DATE MAY 28-29,
COMMUNIST PARTY (PCF) LEADERS GEORGES MARCHAIS AND ROLAND
LEROY ACCUSED PCF DISSIDENTS OF ORGANIZING A "FACTION"
WITHIN THE PARTY AND OF TRYING TO ELIMINATE THE PCF'S
"DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED LEADERSHIP." ALL ORGANS OF THE
PARTY PRESS HAVE BEEN MOBILIZED IN A MAJOR EFFORT AIMED

AT ISOLATING THE PROTEST MOVEMENT, LABELING IT THE WORK OF A VERY SMALL MINORITY (ABOUT 1,000 MEMBERS) WHICH REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE MAJORITY DECISION OF THE PARTY'S "630,000 MEMBERS" (SIC). PCF DISSENT, DIRECTED MAINLY AT THE LEADERSHIP'S REFUSAL TO FULLY ANALYZE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE LEFT DEFEAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS -- "THE PCF BEARS ABSOLUTELY NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THAT FAILURE" -- CONTINUES IN A VARIETY OF FORMS, INCLUDING A PETITION ORIGINALLY SIGNED BY OVER 300 PARTY MEMBERS AND PUBLISHED IN LE MONDE, NOW BEARING ABOUT 900 SIGNATURES. ALTHOUGH MARCHAIS HAS PROCLAIMED THAT THERE WILL BE NO EXCLUSIONS FROM THE PARTY, RECENT CHARGES OF BREAKING PARTY REGULATIONS AND WORKING AGAINST ITS LEADERSHIP HAVE LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR SANCTIONS OF SOME KIND, SHOULD PROTEST PERSIST. END SUMMARY.

1. DISSENT CONTINUES: AFTER AN "UNPRECEDEDENTED DEBATE" IN MARCH AND APRIL, THE MARCHAIS REPORT OF APRIL 27, ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, OFFICIALLY RANG DOWN THE CURTAIN ON PCF ANALYSIS OF LEFT FAILURE IN THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. THE CONCLUSION WAS SIMPLE: "THE PCF BEARS NO RESPONSIBILITY WHATSOEVER FOR THAT DEFEAT", ALL BLAME BEING CAST ON THE SOCIALISTS FOR THEIR "SLIDE INTO SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY." HOWEVER, THAT DECISION HAS NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY SOME PARTY MEMBERS WHO HAVE CONTINUED THEIR CRITICISM OF PCF STRATEGY AND TAC-

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TICS AT A MOMENT WHEN DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM REQUIRES TERMINATION OF THE DEBATE. PARTICULARLY OUTRAGING FOR COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP WAS THE PUBLICATION IN LE MONDE MAY 19 OF A CRITICAL TEXT BEARING SE 300 SIGNATURES, INCLUDING THOSE OF JEAN ELLEINSTINE AND LOUIS ALTHUSSER TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME. AS OF MAY 30, THE PETITION HAD ACCUMULATED SOME 900 SIGNATURES, FROM ALL ACROSS FRANCE AND FROM DIVERSE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CATEGORIES.

2. A "HORIZONTAL" INITIATIVE: THE OFFENDING PETITION, WHICH ORIGINATED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AIX-EN-PROVENCE AND THEN CIRCULATED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF PARISIAN INTELLECTUALS, MAKES TWO POINTS:

- PCF ATTACKS AGAINST INTELLECTUALS ARE INSULTING AND CONTRADICT THE PROCLAIMED POLICY OF ALLIANCE WITH ALL CLASSES;
- THE PARTY IS HURTING ITS OWN FUTURE THROUGH ITS FAILURE TO EXAMINE WHY THE LEFT "REALLY" FAILED IN 1978, E.G., WHY DID THE PCF CHOOSE COMBAT INSTEAD OF UNION, WHY DID THE PCF AGREE TO THE SHAM OF UNITY ON MARCH 13 WHEN THE PS HAD CONCEDED NOTHING AT ALL, ETC.

FOR COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER, THE REAL DANGER IS
THE DISREGARD FOR THE RULES OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM
WHICH PROHIBIT COORDINATION OUTSIDE OF THE ESTABLISHED
VERTICAL CHAIN OF COMMAND AND WHICH INSIST THAT DEBATE
CEASE ONCE A POLICY HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY THE PARTY. NOT
ONLY HAS DISSENT CONTINUED, BUT THE EXISTENCE OF 900
SIGNATURES FROM DIVERSE PARTS OF THE COUNTRY DEMONS-

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TRATES AN UNPRECEDENTED DEGREE OF THE DREADED "HORIZON-

TAL" COMMUNICATION.

3. AN ACCUMULATION OF ILLS: THE "PETITION OF 300" IS
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IN FACT ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL RECENT SETBACKS FOR PCF LEADERSHIP. THE MUNICIPAL BY-ELECTION IN SAINT-MALO PROVIDED THE FRIST TEST FOR THE NEW SOCIALIST STRATEGY OF INCREASED AUTONOMY AND A RESULT WHICH CAN ONLY BE TERMED A SMASHING (THOUGH GEOGRAPHICALLY LIMITED) SUCCESS. REFUSING TO RUN A UNION LIST WITH THE PCF (AS IN MARCH 1977) BECAUSE OF COMMUNIST ACTIONS DURING THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS, THE PS INCREASED ITS FIRST ROUND SCORE BY 13.5 PERCENT (WHILE THE PCF LOST NEARLY THREE POINTS) AND THEN SWEPT TO VICTORY WITH OVER 57 PERCENT ON THE SECOND ROUND, BRINGING ALONG PCF VOTERS AS WELL AS NUMEROUS CENTRISTS. THAT RESULT CAN ONLY ENCOURAGE THE PS TO IGNORE THE COMMUNISTS IN FUTURE CONTESTS AND WOULD SEEM TO SHOW THAT REGARDLESS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S ANALYSIS, A HEFTY PERCENTAGE OF THE LEFT ELECTORATE PLACES THE BLAME FOR LAST MARCH ON PCF RATHER THAN PS SHOULDERS.

4. PC/ LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN FURTHER BESET BY A STEADY STREAM OF IN OR PROVOCATIONS ON THE PART OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS, SUCH AS ELLEINSTEIN'S PARTICIPATION MAY 28 IN A DEBATE ORGANIZED BY THE TROTSKYIST LIGUE COMMUNISTE REVOLUTIONNAIRE WHICH HUMANITE TERMED "AN ATTACK ALL AZIMUTHS AGAINST THE PCF." FORMER POLITBURO MEMBER ROGER GARAUDY (EXCLUDED IN 1970) HAS JOINED IN THE FRAY AS WELL, ACCUSING THE PCF OF OPTING FOR THE CONSERVATIVE AND LOSING SOLUTION IN 1978 JUST AS IT DID IN 1968 WHEN IT FAILED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES OF THE "EVENTS OF MAY." OTHER SIGNS OF DISSENT INCLUDE AN OPEN LETTER IN LE MONDE BY 15 COMMUNIST SCIENTISTS CRITICIZING THE PARTY'S ANTI-INTELLECTUAL CAMPAIGN AND ANOTHER CRITICAL PETITION CIRCULATED BY COMMUNIST STUDENTS IN PARIS, WHO HAVE ALSO LAUNCHED A SEPARATE CAMPAIGN WITH PS STUDENTS TO "REBUILD THE UNION OF THE LEFT."

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5. MARCHAIS' COUNTERATTACK: INITIAL PCF REACTION IN MARCH AND APRIL WAS RELATIVELY TOLERANT, PLAYING SLIGHTLY ON THE ANTI-INTELLECTUAL BIAS IN THE RTY WHILE TRY-

ING TO DISCREDIT THE PROTESTORS BY CHARACTERIZING THS
THE SAME SMALL GROUP WHICH D OPPOSED THE 22ND CONGRS
LINE (TRUE ONLY FOR ALTHUSSER AND HIS FOLLOWERS). WHEN
DISSENT CONTINUED EVEN AFTER THE CENTRAL COMMIT-
TEE HAD CLOSED OUT PARTY DEBATE, THE LEADERSHIP MOVED
MORE FORCEFULLY, INCLUDING PRIVATE SESSIONS WITH KNOWN
PROTESTORS. MARCHAIS HIMSELF MET WITH ELLEINSTEIN IN A
STORMY, NON-CONCLUSIVE MEETING WHICH ENDED WITH ELLEINS-
TEIN'S DECISION TO SIGN THE "PETITION OF 300" ALONG
WITH ALTHUSSER.

6. THE REACTION TO THIS PETITION HAS BEEN AN ESCALATION
OF THE PARTY'S COUNTEROFFENSIVE, WHICH NOW INCLUDES ALL
ORGANS OF THE COMMUNIST PRESS AND ALL THREE OF THE
PARTY'S TOP LEADERS, MARCHAIS, LEROY AND LAURENT. (EVEN
THE SOVIET PRESS HAS JOINED IN WITH A RINGING DENUNCIA-
TION OF ELLEINSTEIN IN NEW TIMES). SEIZING ON THE PETI-
TION AS HARD EVIDENCE OF THE DISSENTERS' "FACTIONAL"
GOALS, PCF THEMES INCLUDE:

- THE VIOLATION OF PARTY REGULATIONS INHERENT
IN SUCH HORIZONTAL ORGANIZATION;
- THE THREAT TO PCF VIABILITY AS AN AVANT-GARDE,
REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT NECESSITATING ABSOLUTE
DISCIPLINE;
- THE REFUSAL OF A SMALL MINORITY TO ACCEPT THE
DECISIONS OF AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY;
- THE ASSISTANCE BEING RENDERED TO THE BOURGEOIS
PRESS AND TO THE SOCIALISTS IN THEIR EFFORTS
TO DESTROY THE PCF'S EFFECTIVENESS.

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7. "FRACTIONAL ACTIVITY": MOVING ONE STEP FURTHER MAY
28-29, BOTH MARCHAIS AND LEROY CATEGORICALLY DEFINED
THE PROTEST MOVEMENT AS A "FRACTIONAL OPERATION, COMBAT-
TING OUR POLICIES, OUR PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION AND
AVOWING THAT ITS OBJECTIVE IS TO ELIMINATE THE DIREC-
TION OF THE PARTY ELECTED DEMOCRATICALLY AT THE 22ND
PARTY CONGRESS." MARCHAIS ADDED STATISTICS TO DEMON-
STRATE THE MINORITY NATURE OF SUCH PROTEST:

- OF 98 FEDERATIONS, ALL APPROVE THE PARTY LINE;
- ONLY FIVE SECTIONS OUT OF 2724 AND 65 CELLS
OUT OF 27,000 CAN MUSTER A MAJORITY AGAINST

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THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE POSITION;

-- SINCE THE APRIL 27 MEETING, THE PCF HAS RECEIVED ONLY 50 LETTERS CONCERNING THE RESULT
(COMPARED TO ABOUT 400 -- PRO AND CON -- BE-

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FORE APRIL 27).

8. COMMENT: CLEARLY THE PCF LEADERSHIP HAS PULLED OUT
ALL THE STOPS, SHORT OF EXCLUSION FROM THE PARTY.

THERE IS NO MORE SERIOUS CHARGE THAN THE ORGANIZATION OF "FRACTIONAL ACTIVITY" AND ON THAT SCORE MARCHAIS, LEROY AND OTHERS ARE BUILDING A CONVINCING CASE. THE "PETITION OF 300" HAS PROVIDED A POWERFUL WEAPON FOR PARTY LEADERS WHO CAN NOW DEMONSTRATE THAT THE PROTESTORS ARE BOTH IN VIOLATION OF PARTY REGULATIONS AND IN AN EXTREMELY MINORITY POSITION. IN CALLING THEM POOR LOSERS WHO REFUSE TO ABIDE BY THE CODE OF MAJORITY RULE AND WHO CONSCIOUSLY ABET THE EFFORTS OF THE BOURGEOISIE TO WEAKEN THE PCF, COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP PLAYS EFFECTIVELY TO PARTY PATRIOTISM AND TO THE VERY REAL MAJORITY WHICH DOES AGREE WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITH THE OFFICIAL PARTY LINE.

9. MANY OF THE BIG NE PROTESTORS, HOWEVER; HAVE GONE TOO FAR TO TURN BACK AND CAN BE COUNTED ON TO CARRY THE DEBATE FORWARD UNTIL THE 23RD CONGRESS NEXT YEAR. THEY DECcry THE FORMATION OF FACTIONS AS HRTILYS ANYONE AND HOPE TO RAIN WITHIN THE PARTY, ING THE FORUM PROVIDED BY THE UPCOMING CONGRESS TO PUSH THE PCF FURTHER ALONG THE ROAD OF LIBERALIZATION. AT THE SAME TIME, SOME OF THEIR SUPPORTERS OF TODAY PROBABLY CANNOT WITHSTAND THE GROWING OSTRACISM OF THEIR COLLEAGUES. THE PARTY MACHINERY BEARS MORE HEAVILY ON THE ISSUE, AND THEY ARE LIKELY TO MOVE BACK INTO THE PCF MAINSTREAM MARKED BY TOTAL CONFORMITY AND DISCIPLINE. INDEED, A NUMBER OF THE 300 SIGNERS HAVE ALREADY SAID THAT FURTHER DEBATE MUST BE CARRIED ON ONLY WITHIN THE PARTY.

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10. PCF LEADERS HAVE THUS FAR AVOIDED THE RISKY OPTION OF FORMAL EXCLUSION WHICH COULD TURN PROTESTORS INTO MARTYRS, BUT HAVE SPARED NO EFFORT IN TRYING TO ISOTE LEADING DISSIDENTS BY PORTRAYING THEM AS THE WITTING OR UNWITTING AGENTS OF THE BOURGEOISIE, OPERATING OUTSIDE THE LEGITIMATE BOUNDS OF PARTY ACTIVITY. WITHOUT THE ULTIMATE SANCTION OF EXCLUSION, WHICH MARCHAIS HAS PUBLICLY RULED OUT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, THE LEADERSHIP NO DOUBT COUNTS HEAVILY ON TIME TO TAKE ITS TOLL, PARTICULARLY DURING THE SUMMER VACATIONS WHEN POLITICAL INTEREST WILL WANE. MOREOVER, THE MAIN DEBATE HAS BEEN AT LEAST TEMPORARILY DEFLECTED FROM AN ATTACK ON INTERNAL PARTY DEMOCRACY TO ONE DIRECTED AGAINST THE "FRACTIONAL" IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROTESTORS' DEMARCHE. GIVEN THE RELATIVELY SCARCE RESOURCES OF THE DISSENT MOVEMENT--WHICH MAY BE OF UNPRECEDENTED SIZE FOR THE PCF, BUT REMAINS MINUSCULE IN ABSOLUTE TERMS -- IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT MOMENTUM, PARTICULARLY IN THE FACE OF AN AROUSED PCF LEADERSHIP.

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